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**Statement submitted by World Society of Victimology, a
non-governmental organization in consultative status with the
Economic and Social Council***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The World Society of Victimology promotes the study of victims, the causes of victimisation and victims' responses to victimisation as well as studies the effects of victimisation. Some members work with others to address the high rates of criminal victimization throughout the world; others engaged in victim-assistance programmes for people who have suffered harm resulting from human acts or omissions, and/or natural phenomena such as floods and earth-quakes.

The World Society of Victimology asserts that criminal victimisation can also result from socio-economic conditions, such as unemployment, education and training, substance misuse, housing, mental and physical health, attitudes and self-control, institutionalisation, debt and family breakdown. Crime, for instance, is disproportionately committed by people from socially excluded backgrounds but also persons in poverty are more likely in most developed nations to be victims of violent victimisation. Thus, tackling such socio-economic conditions is essential.

The World Society of Victimology proposes that governments and civil society should collaborate to build capacity within member-states to develop victim assistance programmes, to sustain existing victim assistance programmes and to expand such programmes that are effective and efficient, and proven to improve outcomes for victims impacted by socio-economic conditions. Such capacity will depend on, among other factors, the preparedness of government agencies and non-government organisations to cooperate and coordinate services to victims. The overarching aim of such cooperation and coordination should be victims' right to fair, just and equitable access to assistance and services that empower them.

Advocacy is critical, so the World Society of Victimology calls on leaders in government and civil society to generate the necessary political support and investment to ensure those tasked to help victims do so in accordance with their obligations; for example, making certain the assistance and services available to victims are accessible as and when victims' need them. Our world's leaders should reinforce their commitment to victims' rights, which should be understood as human rights.

To attain inclusive and civil communities (grounded on principles such as the rule of law) and to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and children, among other important goals, the World Society of Victimology recommends:

- Developing programs to assist victims (in particular women and children) to be safe in their homes and communities, and to minimise the risk of re-victimisation;
- Ensuring an integrated service delivery response to crime and violence that is accessible for those victims who seek practical, material, medical, psychological and other assistance;
- Developing responsive criminal justice personnel and just and fair legal procedures and equitable processes to prevent secondary victimisation as well as attain justice for victims;
- Providing more information to victims about their rights and how to exercise such but also ensuring they are treated according to such rights;

- Assisting consultation and cooperation between government personnel and victim-service providers to facilitate the implementation of victims' rights.

Ameliorating the socio-economic factors associated with victimisation and prioritising the rights and needs of victims are crucial to sustainable development. Rethinking and strengthening social development is important and necessary to reduce and prevent victimisation.
